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In the deepest Earth's mantle, 100 miles below, there's a unique ugly rock. That unique ugly rock, will go through the highest temperatures and through harsh compressions. This rock will constantly evolve into something beautiful, something shiny, and something really valuable. Hello, my name is Ernesto Yoro Jr, and I'm from the Hale Pono Boys and Girls Club, Ewa Beach.

When I was four years old, I had witnessed a traumatic event. I witnessed a pedestrian fatality. That pedestrian was my grandmother. After that event had happen, it lead me down a hopeless and lonely path, because I had no one to run to and no one to talk to. Because my dad was an alcoholic, he was never there and my mom, who is a hard worker, tried to make ends meet to provide for me and my older brother.

You see, not having the support I needed lead me down the wrong path. In the beginning of my 8th grade year, I was exposed to drugs, which in turn, lead to my addiction to marijuana. Thus, lead me to ditching school a lot. All I cared about during that time was getting high because it allowed me to put all my problems aside.

Middle of 8th grade year, a good friend of mine invited me to join the BGCH. My first day at the club, I met Lori Respicio, a staff member, who made sure that I understood the expectations to being a club member. In that conversation, she was open and honest, yet stern. Frankly, I gained a lot of respect for Lori.

A few weeks later, I came to the club. Lori had noticed that I was gone for awhile and ultimately, I was caught in a lie. She realized that I wasn't in class learning and I was out at the beach getting high. Lori had taken me aside, and that's where we had our heart-to-heart conversation. I told her my issues that I was dealing at home. Right then and there, I realized that she cared. I realized that the BGCH was my support. After our heart-to-

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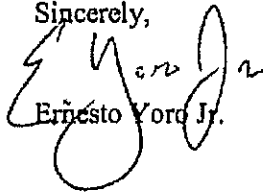
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heart conversation I wanted to change, [short pause] to overcome by drug addiction.

After going to the club for a few months, I didn't have the desire to do drugs anymore. The club had provided me with programs like Leaders In Training, where I learned to make better decisions, where I learned to manage my time better, and where they had provided me with opportunities to serve my community. I wanted to be a good example, so I could be a good mentor for my younger club members.

I am now a proud 4 year member, and I realized that the BGCH is a place for support. Support for people like me, people who have been through tough times and people who have rough pasts. The BGCH shapes that ugly rock into something beautiful, something valuable, and into something unique. That rock shapes into a diamond, like me.

Sincerely,



Ernesto Yoro Jr.



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